

29 July 2009

Cows moo-ve in to Fremington Nature Reserve

Fremington Local Nature Reserve is about to receive its first herd of cows, in a new project to improve conditions for wildlife through grazing.

Last year the reserve received a grant for almost £8k to fence off an area of wet marsh for grazing cattle.

Now that North Devon Council and the North Devon Coast & Countryside Service (NDCCS) have installed the fencing, local farmer Paul Tucker is introducing a small herd to graze the area over the summer months.

Much of the important bird life that is found on the estuary in winter depends on finding food in short vegetation and mud. It is hoped that re-introducing traditional summer grazing on the reserve will create the right conditions for many bird species for both feeding during the winter and breeding during the summer.

Tom Hynes, Countryside Officer with the NDCCS says: "Because we live in a farming area it is really nice to see farming and countryside management going hand in hand. Grazing the land should have huge biodiversity benefits – we have to keep the area open or we will lose our bird and wildlife interest."

Andrew Moulton, Community Officer, for North Devon Council says: "The reserve was set up in 2006 to help people enjoy local wildlife and to encourage more wildlife into the village and surrounding area. It is really exciting to see the first cows arrive, and to see the benefits to local wildlife over the coming months."

A survey has been carried out before the cows are introduced and will be repeated every year for the next three years, to see what effect the grazing has on wildlife in the reserve.

The project received £6,793 from the SITA Trust, through the Landfill Communities Fund and a further £1,000 from the Northern Devon Coast & Countryside's grazing marsh project.

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Notes to editors

SITA Trust distributes funds through the Landfill Communities Fund. Funding is available for community and environmental improvement projects within 10 miles of an active SITA UK landfill site.

Since 1997 the Trust has allocated over £54M to hundreds of projects across the UK. For Further information about how to apply for funding, please call the Trust on (01454) 262910 or visit www.sitatrust.org.uk.